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MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : Crisis Management Task Force

SUBJECT : Intelligence Support to National Decision Making In Periods of Crisis

I. The PROBLEM

The past three decades have constituted a period of dramatic, even revolutionary, change for intelligence. Burgeoning technology and the broad scope of requirements placed on intelligence have given us collection capabilities (and budgets) that would have been literally unthinkable at the close of World War II. Our organizational and procedural concepts, however, have changed much more slowly. They have not yet fully adapted to the changes technology has made in the intelligence environment. As a result, we are in a situation where technology can actually inhibit our performance.

The Intelligence Community has three basic sets of responsibilities:

-- Warning, i.e., providing advance warning of an impending attack upon the United States or on US forces abroad by a foreign power; or providing warning of the fact that a foreign power is planning, or even seriously contemplating, such an attack.



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-- Supporting those who, under our Constitution, make the decisions that determine our country's foreign and national security policy. This function has particular importance in periods of potential, imminent, or actual crisis.

-- Supporting the conduct of foreign policy and the execution of national security decisions, including supporting the conduct of wartime operations.

Our present national intelligence structure is not optimally designed to perform these functions. In particular, it is not set up to cope with the stresses and demands of a period of major crisis and is even less well structured to handle the requirements of a wartime situation.

The reasons for these design flaws are not hard to discern. At one level they derive from the fact that the Intelligence Community, and its several components, serve a variety of customers -- from the President and the NSC to a battalion commander -- who have different interests, perspectives, and needs. These interests are frequently competitive, especially in matters relating to the allocation of collection or analytic resources, or to the tasking of systems that cannot handle the requirements of all users simultaneously.

At another level, however, the problems alluded to above derive from the fact that we do not really have a single, inte-

grated national intelligence system. Instead, we have two systems, with most components of the Community being members of both.

a. One could be termed the Intelligence Community System. This is the Intelligence Community whose foundations were laid in Section 102(d) of the National Security Act of 1947. It has evolved over almost three decades into the conglomerate described and defined in Executive Order 11905. At its apex is the Director of Central Intelligence, who is the President's principal foreign intelligence officer and advisor. He reports directly to the NSC and is not subordinate to the head of any cabinet department. The DCI chairs two important bodies: one, the Committee on Foreign Intelligence, plays a key role in developing and allocating the Community's resources; the other, the National Foreign Intelligence Board, plays a key role in guiding the Community's production of national intelligence. A major element of this system is the Central Intelligence Agency, which the DCI also heads. The CIA is an independent entity which reports through the DCI to the NSC. Within this system the CIA has primary responsibility for the clandestine collection of foreign intelligence and for covert action, and for the production of national (as opposed to departmental) intelligence.

25X1

b. The other could be termed the National Command Authority System. This is the system being developed by the Department of Defense to link with its Worldwide Military Command and Control System. The Defense Department planners developing this system naturally incorporate within it all the intelligence assets and components of the Defense Department -- which comprise roughly 80% of the assets of the Intelligence Community.

The two systems described above do not really track or mesh:

-- They are built on different concepts:

a. The IC System is built on the concept of a true community, with military and civilian components, headed by a non-departmental DCI and intended to support the President -- especially in his role as head of the National Security Council -- the NSC Staff, and all of the NSC departments.

b. The NCA System is built on the concept of a line running from the President -- in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief -- through the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the JCS, and the JCS (as an institution), to major US military commanders in the field, the CINCS. As recent exercises have demonstrated, few of the concepts or institutions around which the IC System was built -- the NSC, the WSAG, the Secretary of State, the non-departmental

DCI, and the CIA -- fit easily into the NCA schema.

-- They are keyed to different enviroments:

a. The IC System was designed primarily to function in a peacetime environment, to support the President and the NSC and its members (plus to some extent, the Congress) in formulating and conducting foreign and national security policy.

b. Oversimplifying, it was designed to help our government prevent or avoid major crises, including war. It was not meant as a mechanism to assist in the conduct of wartime operations. (All of the pertinent statutes and Executive Orders, for example, are silent on what the DCI's wartime role is supposed to be.)

-- They are focused on different perceptions of intelligence needs:

a. The IC System, oversimplifying again, responds to what we have come to view as reality. It is meant to support the making of political decisions (which may, of course, have significant military ingredients). It is built to produce information, analyses, assessments, and estimates on the political dynamics of foreign situations, the policies and intentions of foreign governments, and the factors that are likely to shape, influence, or alter the policies of foreign governments.

b. The NCA System is designed to help the President as Commander-in-Chief, the Secretary of Defense, the JCS, and the CINCS fight a war. In its intelligence focus, it is keyed to monitoring the concrete -- troop deployment, and other forms of actual behavior -- not to assessing such abstractions as political dynamics, priorities, goals, or intentions.

To make matters worse, these two overlapping systems are not only significantly different in concept, design, and purpose, but they also show that no real planning has been done on whether, when, or how the US intelligence structure should shift from one to the other. Such transition questions are thorny and not easily resolved. They involve major issues of jurisdiction and asset control.

They also have built in tensions. The natural instinct of those who would be responsible for fighting a war is to want to take control of the intelligence assets they would need in wartime as early as possible in any crisis situation that could end in hostilities. The natural instincts of senior officials with other responsibilities, however, run in precisely the opposite direction. They want to make the most of the President's and the NSC's flexibility by postponing as long as possible any diminution of the Intelligence Community's capacity to contribute to peacetime political decision making.

25X1

The net result of the above factors is that the US Intelligence Community is not well structured to support the President and his senior advisors in a serious crisis situation, and even less well organized to do so in wartime. Peacetime-crisis-wartime transition arrangements are unclear. This almost guarantees confusion and diminished national intelligence capabilities at the very time when these can least be afforded.

II. Steps Toward A Solution

The solution to the problems described above lies in improving our perception of the way political events, including foreign threats to the security of the United States, actually develop and interact. Peacetime, crises, and wartime are not discreet states. The latter two can develop quickly, but they do not come from a vacuum. In foreign affairs, there is a continuum, ranging from peacetime, or "normalcy," to all out thermonuclear war. This continuum sets limits on a dynamic process, full of continuously interacting variables.

For conceptual purposes, we have divided it into four segments. This four-segment thesis is arbitrary: it could be one, two, or an infinite number. But it is essential to understand that each of these segments is a part of the continuum, with each growing out of the one that precedes it and shading into the one that follows.

In our opinion, however, the problems outlined above can best be addressed in terms of intelligence support arrangements necessary for supporting national decision making and for executing national policy, in four different environments:

a. The first is "normalcy," the kind of situation that existed on 1 August 1976. The world is full of tension, stress, and actual or potential strife. There are many messy situations (e.g., Lebanon) but there is no immediate likelihood of hostilities in which the US would be directly involved or of any attack on the US or US forces.

b. The second is what we call a "small-c crisis." This is a situation that engages the urgent attention of the President and his senior foreign policy advisors (civilian and military), which requires special concentration, decisions, and/or procedures -- e.g., special WSAG or NSC meetings -- but does not involve the threat of major hostilities in which US forces would be attacked or a physical attack on the territory of the United States. Lebanon, at various times, has been a "small-c" crisis. Another example would be the Mayaguez incident.

c. The third, closely related to the second, is what we call a "capital-C crisis." Its hallmark would be a situation that could readily involve a significant use of US forces or a direct confrontation -- even if this were

initially a political confrontation -- with a foreign power capable of physically attacking the home territory of the United States, e.g., the Soviet Union. A new Middle East war in which the Soviets were directly backing at least some Arab protagonists while we were supporting the Israelis would be an example of a capital-C crisis. Similarly, a capital-C crisis could swiftly be generated in Yugoslavia were Tito to die and the Soviets to interfere in the succession in a way the US considered unacceptable.

d. The fourth is wartime, which we define as a situation in which US forces are engaged in combat with forces of a foreign power capable of physically attacking the United States. Vietnam would not have been a wartime situation under this definition; an outbreak of hostilities in Central Europe would be, whether war had been formally declared or whether nuclear weapons had been used.

None of the four stages of the continuum concept outlined above is static. A situation can evolve from one to the other slowly or quickly, and can move in any direction, depending on what the various actors concerned (including the US) do. Each, however, poses its own special requirements for intelligence support to national decision making, and the continuum concept provides a useful context for developing smooth, efficient transitional arrangements.

If these arrangements are to be smooth and efficient, however, they must be truly transitional. Each new set of arrangements should build on those of the preceding segment, with no radical revisions of the way the Intelligence Community does its business and with no sudden injection of totally different concepts or procedures just when there will inevitably be confusion. Also, if intelligence is to provide the best possible support when the best possible assessment of a putative adversary's behavior is most needed, adequate measures will have to be taken to ensure that those framing this assessment are fully apprised of what the US is doing -- e.g., of US actions (from force deployments to hot line messages) that could influence the behavior of foreign governments.